

## HOW TO FIND A QUALITY VIZSLA AND A REPUTABLE BREEDER

You've read articles and books. After doing some research you've decided the Vizsla is the breed for you. Now you're faced with finding a puppy, and Vizslas are not that easy to find! Many people will turn to a pet store, the want ads in the local newspaper or the internet to find a puppy. These are NOT the first place you should look! Buying a puppy from a reputable breeder is the best way to obtain a puppy you will be happy with for life. Breed rescue is also a good option if you are looking for an adult dog.

Most pet stores deal in large numbers of different breeds and obtain their puppies from puppy mills. Puppy mills have only one purpose: to make money. They breed for quantity, not quality. They rarely, if ever, health check their animals. Puppies from these places are generally not properly socialized (very important for Vizslas), vaccinated or wormed. They pay no attention to the breed standard or to temperament. The adult dogs are kept in filthy conditions. Puppy mill puppies' looks and temperaments are unpredictable.

The same is many times true of the "backyard breeder" whose ad you see in the local paper. Many of these people are simply careless or misguided. They want to have a litter so their children can experience it, or they want a puppy, or the litter was an accident. Don't overrule the profit motive. Most of the time these people have no idea what goes into producing a litter of healthy, sound puppies. They have no more intention of standing behind the puppy any more than does the pet store beyond the usual 48 hour health guarantee.

Don't be fooled by fancy websites. If a breeder is willing to sell you a puppy because you completed an online application without ever talking to you, go to a different breeder. If a website says "credit cards accepted" or allows the use of PayPal, go to a different breeder. If a website says, "Large selection available" or "Puppies always available" or shows the breeder having several litters per year, go to a different breeder. Quantity does not equal quality!

Most breeders of Vizslas breed because they are in love with the Vizsla. Their goal is to improve on their breeding stock with each litter. When you purchase from a concerned and educated breeder, you can be sure everything is done to insure correct and typical temperament, good health and conformation. They will follow up with you after "the check is cashed" to see how the puppy is doing. They are always willing to answer questions--to help and guide. When you buy from a reputable breeder, you have made a friend for life, in addition to adding a new Vizsla to your home.

Even though the price from somewhere else may be less, what you may end up paying in vet bills and emotional bills may be much higher than if you buy a puppy from a reputable breeder.

**How do I find a reputable breeder?** Start by contacting your local Vizsla Clubs and the Vizsla Club of America to see if they have a breeder referral program or breeder listing. Attend a show and purchase a show catalog. Talk to exhibitors after they are done showing (many exhibitors are tense before they go in to the ring, so ask to talk to them when they are finished exhibiting). Most exhibitors are willing and eager to talk about their breed. Go to hunt tests, field trials, agility trials and obedience trials and talk to competitors there. If you are computerized - surf the internet. You have the ability to talk to Vizsla people all over the world.

**How do I know a good breeder from a bad?** Someone who shows their dogs, has clean kennels and belongs to the right clubs is not necessarily a good breeder. A pedigree filled with champion ancestors or field titles does not insure you are getting a good puppy. You need to ask the right questions and know what to watch for.

Don't be afraid to ask to come over for a visit prior to the breeding to spend time with the Vizslas. It is VERY important that when you are told Vizslas are active dogs you know what that means. More than one Vizsla has been returned because their owners did not know they were "that active." Good breeders would rather have you decide the breed is too active for you before you purchase a puppy rather than after, regardless of whom you buy the puppy from. They are willing to spend the time for you to find that out.

What are the conditions of the facilities used for the litter? Is it clean? Where is it located? If the puppy area is located away from the main living quarters, ask if the puppies are allowed in the house and what has been done to socialize them. Puppies should be handled consistently from birth. They need to be exposed to different sights and sounds from birth. They need to see different types of people, adults, children, men and women. If the facilities are dirty and the puppies cover in a corner, look elsewhere. If the breeder says that they are never in the house and little socialization has been done, leave without a puppy.

Ask to see the parents. With Vizslas, it is not uncommon for the sire to live elsewhere, but the dam should be clean, friendly and outgoing. If the litter is very young and mom is with them, you may see some protectiveness via growling or barking. This is acceptable behavior.

**Time for the Interview.** Expect to be interviewed by the breeder at length. A concerned breeder wants to make sure that the puppies are going to homes where they will live a long and happy life. They want to know that you are willing and able to take care of health and emotional needs of the Vizsla. Some common questions breeders (and breed rescue groups) ask are: Are you aware of problems in this breed (health, temperament, conformation, etc.). If your answer is no, expect to be educated. Do you have a fenced yard with adequate shelter? Will you keep the dog in the house? Do you have children? If the answer is yes to this question, the breeder will want to meet them. Someone who can't control their children will not control their dog. If you have children, the breeder will want to know what activities they participate in. Are you aware of the size, coat, etc. of the adult dog? Are you aware of the temperament traits of this breed? How will you exercise your Vizsla and who will do it? Does everyone in your family want this dog? If not, the chances are good that this won't last for the long haul. EVERYONE must be in agreement before buying a Vizsla or any breed.

**What questions should you ask?** Learn about the health problems of a breed before you go to a breeder then ask the question. What are the health problems in this breed? If you've done your research, this is a good way to know if a breeder is being forthright and honest with you. Have both parents been checked for these problems? Can I have copies of these certificates or reports? What health problems have you in particular encountered over the years? What guarantees do you give and under what circumstances? What traits did you consider when breeding this litter (temperament, hunting ability, conformation, etc.) What are the drawbacks or negatives of this breed? (If the breeder does not have several negatives to go with the positives, or worse yet, says there are no negatives, run the other way.) Will the breeder give references?

**Breeder Contracts.** Most reputable breeders employ a contract as a way of setting down agreements and guarantees of the sale. This protects both the breeder and the buyer. Contracts usually cover health guarantees, responsibilities of the breeder and buyer, and most will state that the breeder will take the dog back if it isn't satisfactory for whatever reason. Many breeders have a spay/neuter clause and/or a limited registration for pet quality puppies. Requiring the puppy be spayed or neutered is a way of controlling accidental and misguided breedings and helps with over population of unwanted dogs. Please don't be put off when a breeder insists on a contract. It is for your protection too.

**Picking out the puppy.** If you have done your research, and found the Vizsla litter that is right for you, the chances of getting a puppy that is right, increases immensely. Don't be in a hurry to get a puppy. Wait for the litter and the breeder that seem to fit your needs.

It is not unusual for a breeder to not allow a buyer to pick their own puppy. A family with children will be happier with a more docile puppy than the dominant, "here I am" puppy from a litter. A breeder may pick the puppy for you, or give you a choice of only two or three from the litter. The breeder is concerned about making a match for the life of the puppy. Rely on their knowledge of the breed and their time with the puppies in their litter, to pick the puppy that is best for you. Chances are you will not be disappointed.

If you are allowed to pick from the litter, avoid any puppy who seems ill. Actually, if there is a puppy in a litter that seems ill, you may want to avoid that litter entirely. Puppies should be active, happy and outgoing, with no sign of fear. Approaching you with caution is acceptable as long as they then relax and play. Pups that cringe in the corner could develop into fear biters. On the other hand, the pup that rushes to you happily, shoving his littermates aside in order to be the first to you, the one who bites your hands or jumps at your chin will be a handful, needing a strong, experienced owner. If you are not an experienced owner of a Vizsla, you will probably want to choose a puppy that falls somewhere in between these two extremes.

- **Vizslas are a wonderful breed, but they are not for everyone.**
- **Take the time to research thoroughly before buying a puppy.**
- **Take the time to find a responsible concerned breeder. You will find it is time well spent.**

Vizsla puppies, as well as any other breed, are a commitment for the life of the dog. If you spend the time up front finding the right breeder and litter, you can look forward to many happy years with your new family member.